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The Effects of Emotions on Decision-Making

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Emotions and Decision-Making

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to examine the effects emotions (anger, happiness, and control) has on decision-making and the researcher expects to find a difference. A total of eighteen participants completed the study with a mean age of 22.95 years old (SD=5.6). Ten of the participants were female, four were male and four were transgender. Participants viewed a brief clip from a film selected from list compiled by (Schaefer, Nils, Sanchez, & Philippot, 2010). Next, participants completed the PANAS Scale (Watson & Clark, 1994). Then patricians completed a seven-item questionnaire created by (Sirota & Juanchich, 2018) to assess decision-making. The results did not show a difference of decision made across the three conditions, $F(2,15) = 2.03$, $P > .05$, $\eta^2 = .24$.

Prior Research

- Emotions effect decision-making behavior in different ways (Smith & Lazarus 1991).
- Studies on happiness and decision making, show that happiness may lead to higher rates of cognitive flexibility and an increase of creative solutions to problems (Isen, 2001).
- Past studies on anger and decision making, suggest that when individuals are angry, they tend to be lazier thinkers and ignore small nuances (Bodenhausen, Sheppard, & Kramer, 1994).
- A number of studies have used movies to induce specific emotions in their experiments using the film list created by Schaefer and colleagues (Schaefer, Nils, Sanchez, & Philippot, 2010).

Hypothesis

- There will be differences across the three emotion conditions (anger, happiness, and control) will lead to differences in decision-making.

Participants

- N= 18, 10 Females , 4 Males, 4 Transgenders
- 22.95 Mean Age (SD = 5.6)

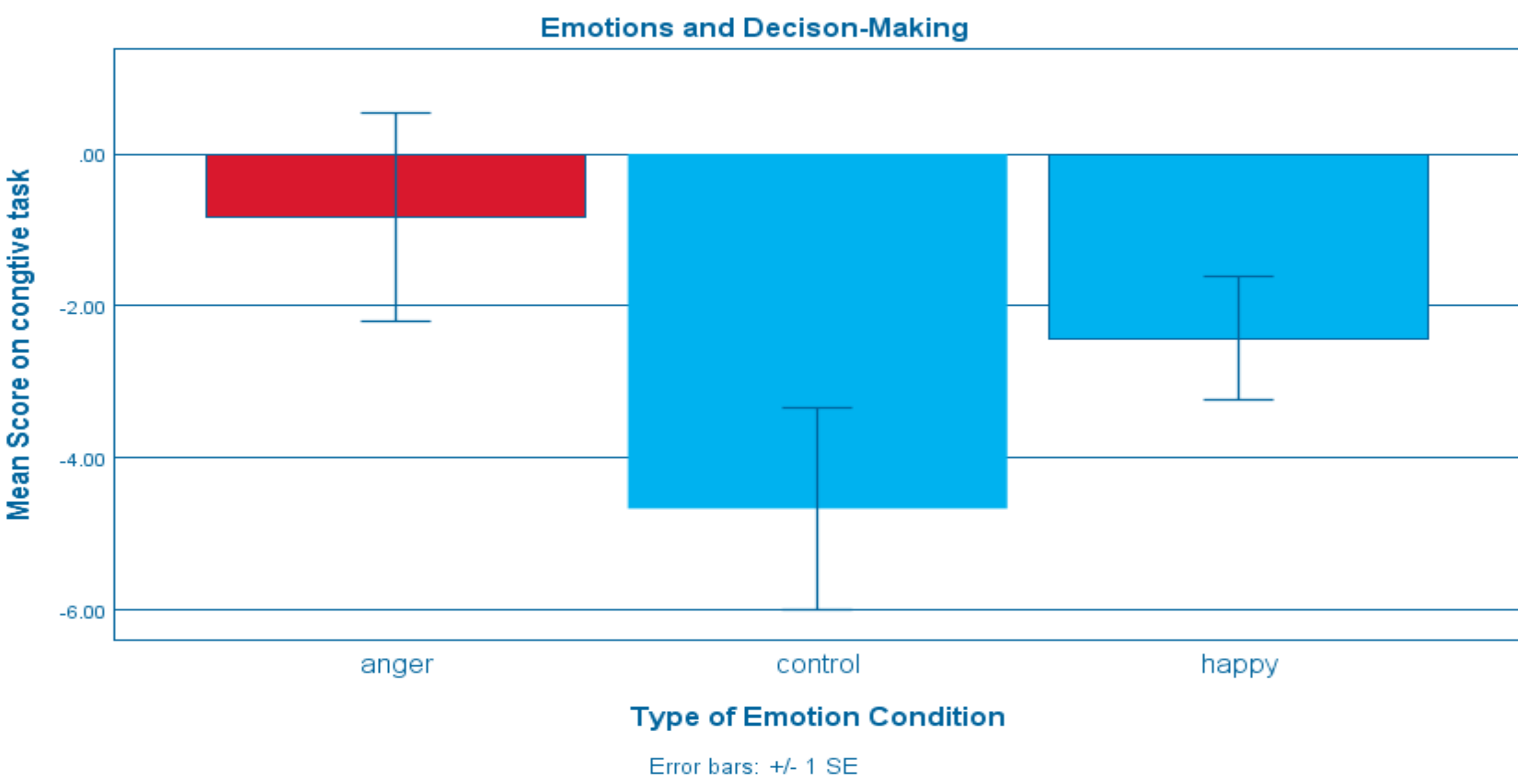
Apparatus

- Positive and Negative Affect Schedule scale (Watson & Clark, 1994)**
20 item questionnaire; Responses recorded on a 5-point Likert Scale (1=very slightly, 5=extremely)
Sample item: “ Indicate the extent you have feel ashamed in this current moment.”
- Cognitive Reflection Test – Multiple Choice version 4 (Sirota & Juanchich, 2018)**
Sample item: “ A bat and a ball cost \$1.10 in total. The bat costs \$1.00 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?”

Procedure

- The experimental design of the study was a between-subjects. Prior researchers, assigned participants to only one level of the independent variable.
- Participants completed the PANAS scale to measure what they were feeling in the current moment at prior to experiencing the independent variable.
- The independent variable of the experiment was emotions which were manipulated by showing clips from movies. This methodology has been in prior research studies Bachkirov (2015) manipulated emotions in the study by showing film, as did Meghana and George (2019).
- Afterwards, participants completed the PANAS scale once more. This methodology was used as a manipulation check and has been used by prior researchers (Meghana & George, 2019).
- Following the manipulation of the independent variable, participants were instructed to complete a cognitive task.

Results



- There were not differences in decision-making across the three conditions $F(2,15) = 2.03$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .24$. Neutral condition (m = - .83), anger condition (m = -4.67), and happy condition (m = -2.25).

Conclusion

- Based on the data, there were no differences in decision-making across the three conditions (anger, control, and happiness). Contrary to what the researcher hypothesized
- The study’s findings do not support prior research. Prior research suggests that anger and happiness do effect decision-making.

Limitations

- Small Sample Size, having a small sample size increased the likelihood of a type II error.
- This study was unable to control for confounding variables like making sure participants viewed the film and completed the task.

Future Research

- Future research should use a different decision- making task to better test for cognitive flexibility and as well cognitive heuristics.
- Other types of emotions like fear, hope, and stress and mood should be examined to see if there is a relationship between the two variables.

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